

Building Outside the Box

The Whooping Cranes have returned to Bells Bend!!

We had a great turnout of over 35 for the Bells Bend Nature Center tour on December 18th. It was a great educational tour on green building and solar power by Metro Nature Center staff and Steve Johnson, with Lightwave Solar Electric.



This week we learned that the extremely rare pair of whooping cranes have returned to the area and have been spotted at the Bells Bend site. With fewer than 400 of this species left in the world, it is wonderful to see them back again this year. See the story and photos here: <http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/gallery?Avis=DN&Dato=20080303&Kategori=GREEN&Lopenr=803030815&Ref=PH>

As you take time for holiday cheer, be sure to make your plans to join us in 2009 for more sustainable building educational programs and projects across the Cumberland River Basin. Mark your calendars for our regular BOB educational meetings on the second Thursday of each month. The first two coming up will be:

January 8th - Aquaterra Engineering - Development Constraints: An Environmental Perspective

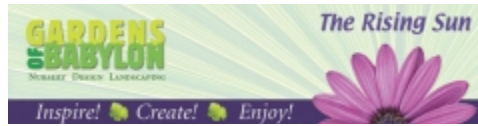
February 12 - Jonathan Woody, Artisan Wood - Inside Story on Sustainable Wood
We'll meet at 11:30 am - 1:00 pm at the Shelby Bottoms Nature Center.

We are also planning these training workshops early in 2009:

- **Green Infrastructure:** What is it and why does it matter?
- **Gray Water and Water Reuse:** Practices, Benefits and Obstacles

Wishing all of you lovely holidays. Please see more holiday news below.
I'm looking forward to many more sustainable building projects in the new year!!!

Be sure to pick up a *Tennessean* the week of Christmas. An active Board Member, volunteer and Compact friend will be featured in the series Unsung Heroes. It's your chance to read up on **Skip Lawrence**, sustainable builder extraordinaire.



Start your New Year off green with Gardens of Babylon curbside pickup! Gardens of Babylon is starting a new campaign this year. After the holidays are over, GOB will drop by to pick up and **recycle** your tree. Cost is **\$10** with **100% of the profits going to the Cumberland River Compact**. Tell your friends! Read more about it [here](#) or call (615) 244-8949.

***Last Minute Shopping Made Easy:
Holiday Gifts Cumberland River Style***



Bread & Company recently unveiled two new programs that are tasty and support the Compact: Club BREAD and "Cookies for the Cumberland." Not only are these gift ideas a treat for you or friends, a portion of the proceeds go to the Cumberland River Compact. Stop by any of the four Nashville-area Bread & Company locations to purchase a Club BREAD card. To order "Cookies for the Cumberland" or to place any other holiday orders, call Courtney Loving at 29-BREAD (615-292-7323). To see all of the delicious treats that our friends at Bread & Company have, click [here](#). There are 25 gift packages to choose from, including Bread & Company artisanal baked goods and other hand crafted items from local favorites such as Bongo Java Roasting Company, Corrieri's Formaggeria, and Partner's Tea Co., honey, sorghum, cookies and more!

"What better holiday gift for your fishing and boating friends, as well as those who photograph in the outdoors... or those who just like drinking a clear, clean glass of water."

In the next few weeks you will be receiving an important letter from us about how you can make a personal difference in your rivers, lakes, and streams. The Compact Founders, Board, staff, and volunteers urge you to give. No gift is too small and we suggest you make a donation in the name of a friend or family member as a unique holiday gift. Make a gift [here](#).



"Can"dles for the Cumberland votives are available for pick up or delivery and make a beautiful gift. Members and friends of the Cumberland River Compact volunteer to create these unique pieces of art using recycled tin cans. All proceeds go toward the educational programs of the Cumberland River Compact. To order, email Brooke at brookes@cumberlandrivercompact.org.



Get a jump on spring with a rain barrel for your garden from the Project Blue Streams Program. Barrels are retro-fitted and ready for use - join the 1,250 citizens of Nashville who have installed a rain barrel in last 15 months! Available for pick up. Delivery in the Nashville Metropolitan area only. Place your order [here](#).

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Report: Low Water Levels Likely This Winter

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is announcing that the Cumberland River system appears to be headed for lake levels at some projects that have not been observed since 1956. If the system does not receive significant rainfall runoff by the end of the year the system could be faced with some very difficult operational decisions regarding river and lake levels.

Extremely dry weather conditions coupled with lake level draw downs associated with ongoing repair work at Wolf Creek and Center Hill Dams has resulted in low lake levels at several area lakes. Lake Cumberland, which is impounded by Wolf Creek Dam, Dale Hollow Lake, and Center Hill Lake are the projects most affected by the low water conditions.

Bob Sneed, who oversees water management activities for the Cumberland River Basin projects explains, "We started out the summer season with only about one-fourth the normal volume of water in the reservoir system. This limitation is far more extreme than any drought that we have experienced since the reservoir system was completed."

Corps of Engineers water managers continue to work closely with representatives from federal, state, and local agencies, and various water users to reduce or eliminate the impacts from this limited supply of water in order to conserve and stretch resources. The basic approach has been to route the minimum volume of water through the reservoir system needed to maintain an uninterrupted water supply to water intakes, avoid serious environmental consequences, and keep commercial navigation traffic moving. Hydropower production and certain forms of recreation have been the areas most impacted by this operational plan.

Lake visitors are being asked to use caution and be aware there may be unmarked structures underwater that could damage vessels. Visitors should also be mindful of wakes, tie-ups and prop washout when launching or near the bank. These courtesies will help ensure that current conditions do not add to the problem of shoreline erosion.

The mission of the Cumberland River Compact is to enhance the water quality of the Cumberland River and its tributaries through education and by promoting cooperation among citizens, businesses, and agencies in Kentucky and Tennessee.